

Grizzly Bear Eats Airplane in Alaska

Bush pilots know that wildlife can be hazardous to their health. Aircraft have collided with giraffes and other large animals on various remote African airstrips, and there are numerous stories of downed pilots being hassled by predators after making forced landings out in the boonies. Lion and hyena are also known to be partial to certain aircraft components, tires being a documented favorite of the big cats.

These pictures, from an unnamed, hapless, but entirely resourceful Alaskan bush pilot take aircraft gastronomy to new heights. It seems the owner of this 1958 Piper Cub – a wood-and-fabric taildragger popular with backcountry pilots – had been on a long fishing trip and after landing one day neglected to clean the aircraft properly.

The fishy aroma attracted a passing grizzly bear who, clearly frustrated at not being able to *see* the lovely fish it could smell, took the plane apart in an effort to find it.

Aircraft fabric is no match for bear claws. The bear also chomped both tires for good measure, and then departed the scene.



Alaskans are a hardy bunch, however – as tough as the aircraft they fly. The pilot radioed for two new tires, three cases of duct tape and a couple of rolls of cellophane to be flown in so he could repair his craft and get home.



The result: an ugly but utilitarian repair job. Like they say, the world really *is* held together with duct tape. So, campers, never leave home without it!

Gutsy to say the least.